Fast-track

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

File ref: 26-BRF-02372 / FTAA-2606-1257

6 November 2026

Sam Pemberton
Horsham Downs Estate Limited (the applicant)
Email: Out of Scope

C/- Renee Fraser-Smith
Tollemache Consultants Limited (the agent)
Email: Out of Scope

Dear Sam

Section 28 – Notice of decisions on the referral application for the Horsham Downs Estate project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

This notice of decisions relates to a referral application received from Horsham Downs Estate Limited (the applicant) for the Horsham Downs Estate project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act).

The Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) has decided to accept the referral application for the project, being satisfied that the criteria in section 22 of the Act are met [*section 21(1)(c)*], and to refer the whole project to the fast-track approvals process under section 26(2)(a) of the Act. The reasons for the Minister's decisions are set out below.

Project details

The project description is to construct and establish an urban development on approximately 54 hectares at Gordonton Road, Gordonton, in the Waikato Region.

The project includes:

a. land use and subdivision to create:
    i. approximately 850–950 lots/units for residential activities (inclusive of the potential for live work units, which include a residential component as well as a commercial and/or light industrial activity component)
    ii. a neighbourhood centre
b. land modification works (including potential watercourse works, wetland reclamation and offsetting works)
c. infrastructure including new roads and existing road upgrades, water and wastewater supply networks, and stormwater management devices and networks (including necessary any takes and discharges of water).

The project will require the proposed approvals:

a. resource consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), including prohibited activities under the National Environmental Standards for Freshwater (drainage of a natural inland wetland) and the Waikato District Plan (subdivision of high-class soils)
b. approvals under the Wildlife Act 1953
c. archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014.

Statutory framework for referral applications

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits.

The project can only be accepted if the Minister is satisfied the criteria in section 22 are met, which includes being satisfied the project is an infrastructure or development project that would have significant regional or national benefits and referring the project to the fast-track approvals process would facilitate the project, including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost effective way than under normal processes, and is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process.

Under section 21(3) of the Act, the Minister must decline a referral application if:

a. the Minister is satisfied that the project does not meet the criteria in section 22
b. the Minister is satisfied that the project involves an ineligible activity
c. the Minister considers they do not have adequate information to inform the decision.

Additionally, the Minister has the discretion to decline a referral application for any other reason, even if the project meets the criteria outlined in section 22 of the Act.

Reasons for accepting the referral application

The Minister is satisfied the project:

a. is an infrastructure or development project that would have significant regional or national benefits; and
b. referring the project to the fast-track approvals process –
    i. would facilitate the project by enabling more timely and cost-effective processing than under normal processes; and
    ii. is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process.

Specifically, the Minister is satisfied the project meets the criteria in section 22 of the Act because:

a. it is a development project that would have significant regional benefits because it will:
    i. increase housing supply through the establishment of approximately 850–950 lots/units for residential development [*section 22(2)(a)(iii)*]
    ii. deliver significant economic benefits through a total contribution of approximately $181.9 million to GDP and will support approximately 1,148 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs [*section 22(2)(a)(iv)*]

b. referring the project to the fast-track approvals process would facilitate the project [*section 22(1)(b)(i)*], including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost-effective way than under normal processes because it includes a prohibited activity under the National Environmental Standards for Freshwater and could not be considered under the RMA

c. referring the project is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process [*section 22(1)(b)(ii)*] because it is not novel in the New Zealand context, nor is it out of step with the kind of projects an expert panel would be required to consider under the standard process.

The Minister is satisfied there is no reason they must decline the project under section 21(3) of the Act. Having considered the matters in section 21(5), the Minister is also satisfied there is no reason to decline the referral application under section 21(4).

Specified matters for the accepted referral application

1. Horsham Downs Estate Limited, who lodged the referral application, as the person who is authorised to lodge a substantive application for the project under section 27(2) of the Act.

2. Under section 27(3)(b)(i) of the Act, a deadline of two years from the date of issue of this letter applies for lodging the substantive application.

3. Pursuant to section 27(3)(b)(ii), the following information must be submitted with the substantive application lodged for the project:

    a. a detailed stormwater management assessment which includes, but is not limited to:
        i. detailed design drawings of the final design of the stormwater system(s)
        ii. detailed assessment of the downstream hydraulic impacts of the proposed development
        iii. assessment of the effects of the project on the wider Freshfields Land Drainage Subdivision
        iv. comparison of pre- and post-development performance of the Waikato Regional Council Drainage Board Scheme, including analysis of rainfall events more frequent than the 2-year ARI event, and an analysis of drain-downs times
        v. a drainage plan demonstrating that Lake E (Lake Tunawhakaheke) will not receive urban runoff during high groundwater periods
        vi. confirmation that total runoff volume for the 10-year ARI event does not increase in the post-development scenario
        vii. confirmation that the stormwater design will not adversely affect the State Highway drainage network or other NZTA assets
        viii. details of how the management of stormwater discharge will give effect to Te Ture Whaimana

    b. a natural hazard assessment which includes, but is not limited to:
        i. assessment of upstream and downstream inundation risk arising from the project, and measures to ensure this risk is not greater than the pre-development scenario

ii. supporting evidence in relation to the Kukutaruhe fault's classification as 'inactive' and further comprehensive seismic hazard assessment for appropriate seismic design to address appropriate design levels to withstand potential earthquake and liquefaction hazards for buildings and infrastructure

c. an integrated transport assessment which includes, but is not limited to:
   i. trip generation and travel demand management opportunities and measures to support mode shift
   ii. walking and cycling connectivity to the existing and planned active mode networks, including consideration of pedestrians, primarily deterring or discouraging pedestrians from crossing the Waikato Expressway as a shortcut to the facilities at Rototuna
   iii. public transport accessibility and the ability of the development to support future public transport services
   iv. network resilience and staging of transport infrastructure upgrades relative to development growth
   v. assessment of cumulative effects in conjunction with other planned growth and urban development in the northern Hamilton and Waikato urban growth area
   vi. identification of any necessary roading upgrades to service the development and assessment of how those upgrades are to be funded and delivered

d. a water supply and wastewater assessment which:
   i. identifies the existing condition and capacity of that infrastructure; and
   ii. identifies any upgrades to that infrastructure that are required in connection with the subdivision and development; and
   iii. identifies any funding required to carry out those upgrades (including who will provide that funding); and
   iv. provides details of ongoing ownership and maintenance responsibilities; and
   v. contains information on any discussions held, and any agreements made, between the authorised person and the relevant infrastructure provider about the relevant infrastructure (including discussions and agreements about the matters referred to in subparagraphs (i) to (iv)); or
   vi. if the project is reliant on private water supply and wastewater treatment, sufficient information to confirm the feasibility of those options, including confirmation that the proposed solution aligns with Te Ture Whaimana.

4. In relation to a substantive application for the project, pursuant to section 27(3)(b)(iii), the panel must invite comments from the following groups, in addition to those specified in section 53:

   a. NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi
   b. Hamilton City Council
   c. IAWAI – Flowing Waters Limited.

Other matters

Under section 16(2)(c) of the Act, the Minister directs any panel that considers a substantive application for the project to comply with the following requirements:

a. have particular regard to Te Ture Whaimana

b. give notice to the Waikato River Authority of the application (which may be fulfilled by an invitation to comment under section 53 of the Act)

c. consider the provisions for appointing hearing commissioners from the register maintained by the Waikato River Authority as they may be applied to the fast-track process

d. have regard to the Waikato-Tainui Environmental Plan, including how to provide for continued partnership with Waikato-Tainui (as a consistent theme running through the plan)

e. consider the detailed information-sharing provisions of the joint management agreements with Waikato Regional Council and Waikato District Council, as they may be applied to the fast-track process.

Under section 28 of the Act, the Secretary for the Environment must also give written notice of decisions made by the Minister on an accepted referral application to the parties specified in Appendix 1 of this letter.

If you have any queries about this notice of decisions, please email *referral@fasttrack.govt.nz* and include the name of the lead contact – Max Gander-Cooper.

If you have any queries about the substantive process, please email *contact@fasttrack.govt.nz* or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

Yours sincerely



Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations

Appendix 1: Section 28 – Notice of Minister's decisions on accepted referral application

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Section 28(1)(a)(i) – The applicant	Horsham Downs Estate Limited

Section 28(1)(a)(ii) – Anyone invited to comment on the application	
Relevant local authorities	Waikato District Council Waikato Regional Council
Relevant portfolio Ministers	Minister for the Environment Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti Minister for Māori Development Minister of Conservation Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage Associate Minister of Housing
Relevant administering agencies	Department of Conservation Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga
The Māori groups under s17(d)	Te Whakakitenga o Waikato Ngāti Hauā Iwi Trust Waikato Raupatu River Trust Waikato River Authority Ngāti Wairere Te Haa o te Whenua o Kirikiriroa
Any other persons under s17(5)	Minister for Regional Development Minister for Economic Growth NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi Hamilton City Council IAWAI – Flowing Waters Limited

Section 28(2) – Other parties for an accepted referral application	
The Panel Convener	Including all the information received by the Minister as required by section 28(4).
Any iwi authorities or Treaty settlement entities (other than those that must be notified as identified above) that the Minister considers have an interest in the matter	No additional iwi authorities or Treaty settlement entities have been identified beyond those listed above.
Environmental Protection Authority (EPA)	Including all the information received by the Minister as required by section 28(4).
Relevant administering agencies	As identified above.